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Sent: 28 May 2024 12:51
To: centre@cityoflondon.gov.uk
Cc: Planning Policy Consultations
Subject: Our Corporate Plan 2024 - 2029 - An 850 year benchmarking?
Attachments: William Fitzstephen London Plan.docx

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Corporate Strategy & Performance Team
Town Clerk's Department
City of London Corporation

Hello Team

May I say how well 'Live Work Learn Explore' reads and I have been impressed with the publicity of this Corporate Plan including the prominence given to Artizan Street Library in the document and the display there. I appreciate this document is being showcased at the same time as the Local Plan consultation. As a courtesy I have copied the Commonplace team. It has relevance to the objectives there.

Please find attached a perspective that may be a little unusual but focuses on a spectacular link, that is to the City's first urban appraisal produced nine centuries ago. It was a short tract, with a strong and urgent economic imperative, written by Londoner William Fitzstephen and generally accepted as dating to 1174, that is 850 years ago.

Encouraged by the opening remarks in 'Live Work Learn Explore' by the Policy Chairman and the Town Clerk and Chief Executive I have drawn out remarkable similarities with Fitzstephen.

I will shortly be speaking to City of London Guides in the Guildhall about William Fitzstephen's London and have written for the Guide Lecturer Association and for Friends of City Churches. For the last two decades I have valued opportunities to contribute to Guildhall Libraries programmes and to engage with City stakeholders, educational institutions, Worshipful Companies, visitors and the resident, church, commercial and office community.

I was born in the City, am a Freeman and the son of a Freedom Holder. I am a member of the City's Conservation Area Advisory Committee for Farringdon Ward (life member). I assist the Royal Town Planning Institute (based in the City) as a retired member. I write here in a personal capacity.

Many thanks.

Lester Hillman

The First City of London Plan?

Benchmarking an 850th Anniversary 1174 – 2024

Ian Thomas CBE Town Clerk and Chief Executive in his foreword to *'Our Corporate Plan 2024 – 2029'* celebrates nine hundred years of City custodianship. It comes in parallel with *'Commonplace'* sharing visions to 2040 and the subject of the subject of current public consultation. How does the 2024 urban appraisal compare with that produced for the City 850 years ago? Remarkably well it seems.

Description of the Most Noble City of London

William Fitzstephen, an aide to Thomas Becket *'Lux Londinium'*, Light of London, Thomas Becket. In some 320 lines, about 4000 words, generally dated to 1174, he vividly appraised contemporary London. It is a nine century City benchmarking without parallel.

Policy Chairman Chris Hayward frames the wider imperatives driving today's Plan. What were Fitzstephen's driving forces? Fitzstephen was promoting destination London. On 29th December 1170 the *'Light of London'* was brutally snuffed out at the altar of Canterbury Cathedral. On 5th September 1174 Becket's Canterbury suffered a severe fire. Becket had been fast tracked to sainthood. International travel, pilgrim tourism and rival shrine centres with health, hospitality and heritage spin off presented economic competition and risk.

Today's corporate vision is mindful of future commercial infrastructure investment. Fitzstephen wrote as London Bridge was being planned, delivered by a fellow cleric from a stakeholder with key technical skills – monumental stonework. The Bridge became a six hundred year infrastructure investment.



Climate is in Fitzstephen's first words, so too in the Corporate Plan '*Sustainability and natural environment*'. Next comes '*Culture and heritage*'. Within that umbrella Churches offer a rare and valued contribution. Here the City can take pride that the number of churches to resident population is pretty much comparable to that nine centuries ago. Today they also serve undreamt of growth in the visitor and working population.

Fitzstephen wrote in latin readily accessible to his contemporary international audience. Prior to wider literacy and printing it was a digital format of its day. John Stow in his 1598 Survey delivered a translation into English and into another contemporary, printed, 'digital age'. Next year marks the 500th anniversary of Stow's birth in the Parish of St Michael Cornhill and he is prominently remembered in the City notably at St Andrew Undershaft.

Fitzstephen recognised the importance of surrounding lands and today's City Plan celebrates the contribution to open space assets and amenity in *'Our responsibilities outside the Square Mile'*. This is an Olympic year and from the way he wrote on sport the City's upgrading of the Parliament Hill Running Track adjacent to the Fleet River would have chimed with him. Fitzstephen focused on education and schools.

The new investment at Dagenham Dock would have been meat and drink to Fitzstephen. He devoted attention to Smithfield, to meat and fish and riverside commercial excellence with a public cookshop at Vintry. Menus were detailed with seemingly limitless capacity round the clock. He was in tune with the *'Vibrant Thriving Destination'*.

Over the nine centuries since Fitzstephen the City has delivered others focusing on an urban vision. Sir Thomas More, a Sheriff, was born in Milk Street next to the Guildhall. A stained glass window across the road features his 1517 book *'Utopia'* charting city management and planning. Not far off a plaque marks the birthplace of Ebenezer Howard and the twentieth century Garden City Movement. The Royal Town Planning Institute has its headquarters in Botolph Lane.



The *'Corporate Plan'* and *'Commonplace'* are being well publicised with libraries such as Artizan Street featured in the Plan. Showcasing meetings such as that under the Roman walls in Vine Street reinforce the urban legacy. The Plan is being rolled out at a time of anniversary way markers and engagement opportunities.

As a courtesy I am letting you know that I will be speaking to the City of London Guides in the Guildhall at their meeting on 3rd June 2024 and have written for City publications on this and related themes.

Lester Hillman

28th May 2024

Born in the City of London, Freedom holder and son of a Freedom Holder. Life Member and Ward Representative on the City of London Conservation Area Advisory Committee (writing here in a personal capacity). Member of City of London Guide Lecturers Association.

by **Lester Hillman**



A young student researcher from Notre-Dame-de-y-Poissy quizzes Douglas Machin (responding in French). Left to right Lewis Claridge, Ken Bean, Derek Read and Peter Shadbolt offered City expertise in the shadow of Duke William of Normandy's fortress.

Walking a Plan

A modest suite in Guildhall's North Wing has recently been the venue for framing the City's future streetscape, and much else affecting guiding over the next decade or two. The *Public Examination into the Core Strategy* held at the end of March scrutinised office growth, use mixes, utility works scheduling, heritage and the pedestrian environment.

Douglas Machin, the appointed Inspector, will now be reporting and a City strategy is likely to be adopted this September. For Douglas Machin this is a return visit, ten years on from the last comprehensive review.

The new plan for the City to 2026 has in fact been taking shape for more than five years, with a draft strategy running to nearly 200 pages produced last year. The issues can excite strong

feelings. Last time, the City found itself inundated with 1,500 representations from motorcyclists.

Tuesday afternoon 29 March was scheduled for the Inspector's City Walk and the opportunity to tag along was too good to miss. Beginning at One New



Change the route took in the Riverside Walk to the Tower of London heading back through the City's eastern cluster of office sites and the Crossrail works.

Fittingly the final steps to the Barbican were by way of the plaque to Ebenezer Howard, the City's own father of town planning.

In the next fifteen years the City expects 1.5mn sq m of new offices, 70% destined for the eastern part of the City. Booking in for a Thames frontage will be 70% of the new hotel space whilst the City's northern area is the likely destination for 80% of the new housing units.

As for retailing growth, 60% will further transform Cheapside. One New Change which opened in October 2010, has added 220,000 sq ft.

In the space of a year the *Strategy* found that students in the City almost doubled to nearly 30,000 and the City Guide course can be proud to have reinforced this learning buzz.

Elsewhere in the *Strategy* 'Riverside Walk Enhancement' and 'Protected Views' feature prominently and Policy CS16.3 at page 106 supports walking and offers ways to contribute to the monitoring of public realm improvements.

The policies are set within a London-wide and national context and there are international dimensions. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee recently threatened to put the Tower of London on their 'Endangered Site List'.

City policies on the preservation and enhancement of vistas are thus set within a global perspective.

Guidance on City trees, sustainable streets, Conservation Area assessments and much else is being rolled out over the next couple of years at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/ldf

If you would like to be involved e mail ldf@cityoflondon.gov.uk ■